

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
MIDDLE DISTRICT OF FLORIDA  
TAMPA DIVISION**

**MARIA INEZ FERNEAU,**

**Plaintiff,**

**v.**

**Case No. 8:20-cv-1613-AAS**

**KILOLO KIJAKAZI,<sup>1</sup>**

**Commissioner,**

**Social Security Administration,**

**Defendant.**

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**ORDER**

Maria Ferneau moves for attorney's fees and costs under the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA), 28 U.S.C. Section 2412. (Doc. 23). The Commissioner does not oppose the motion. (*Id.* at p. 4).

Ms. Ferneau requests \$4,969.07 in attorney's fees. The EAJA permits awards for reasonable attorney's fees and expenses to a prevailing party against the United States. 28 U.S.C. § 2412. A June 15, 2021 order remanded the case to the Commissioner under sentence four of 42 U.S.C. Section 405(g) for further administrative proceedings. (Doc. 20). The Clerk entered judgment

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<sup>1</sup> Kilolo Kijakazi is now the Acting Commissioner of Social Security and is automatically substituted as a party pursuant to Fed. R. Civ. P. 25(d). *See also* section 205(g) of the Social Security Act, 42 USC 405(g) (action survives regardless of any change in the person occupying the office of Commissioner of Social Security).

in favor of Ms. Ferneau. (Doc. 21).

The Commissioner does not contest the following: Ms. Ferneau is the prevailing party; Ms. Ferneau's net worth was less than \$2 million when she filed her complaint; the Commissioner's position was not substantially justified; no special circumstances make an attorney's fees award unjust; and Ms. Ferneau's attorney's fees request is reasonable. A court should grant a Social Security claimant's request for attorney's fees when it is unopposed. *See Jones v. Colvin*, No. 8:13-CV-2900-T-33AEP, 2015 WL 7721334 (M.D. Fla. Nov. 30, 2015) (awarding unopposed attorney's fees request). Thus, Ms. Ferneau is entitled to \$4,969.07 in attorney's fees.

Attorney's fees awarded to a claimant under the EAJA can be offset to satisfy the claimant's pre-existing debt to the United States. *Astrue v. Ratliff*, 560 U.S. 586, 589 (2010). Following this order, the United States Department of the Treasury will determine whether Ms. Ferneau owes a debt to the United States. Ms. Ferneau assigned her rights to EAJA fees to her attorney. (Doc. 23, Ex. A). If Ms. Ferneau has no federal debt, the United States will accept her assignment of EAJA fees and pay the fees directly to counsel.

Accordingly, Ms. Ferneau motion for attorney's fees under the EAJA (Doc. 23) is **GRANTED**. Ms. Ferneau is awarded **\$4,969.07** in attorney's fees.

**ORDERED** in Tampa, Florida on September 14, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Amanda Arnold Sansone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The first name "Amanda" is prominent, followed by "Arnold" and "Sansone".

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AMANDA ARNOLD SANSONE  
United States Magistrate Judge